

[redacted], Chief  
Austrian Bureau, FBIS

Bill,

Attached for your information are copies  
of an exchange of letters between the PAO for  
MBFR in Vienna and me concerning the TRENDS.

Hope all is well with you. I look forward  
to seeing you at the Bureau Chiefs Conference.

[redacted]  
Director, FBIS

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3 February 1981



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. Delegation - MBFR  
Vienna, Austria

January 12, 1981

The Director  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service  
P.O. Box 2604  
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Sir:

The MBFR delegation is on your distribution list to receive the FBIS Daily Report and the classified Trends in Communist Media. Both documents provide valuable information and are very much appreciated.

There is, however, a problem here regarding the classified Trends. Each copy of Trends is automatically declassified six months from date of issue. I question why it should be classified at all. The fact that the document is issued regularly is certainly no secret to anyone interested in it. And, the contents are available as an unclassified document six months after it is stamped "Confidential."

Meanwhile, Trends arrives as registered mail and an authorized person must sign for it. Then, it must be kept in a safe where space (which is already limited) might be better used for documents which if improperly disclosed might do harm to our national security. Thus far, I have not found anything in Trends that would threaten our national security. A lot of man-hours could be saved each year if no one had to assign a registry number to each envelope, and no one had to sign for it on receipt, and no one had to lock it up in a limited-space safe, or had to go back and forth to the safe each time he or she wanted to refer to this useful document.

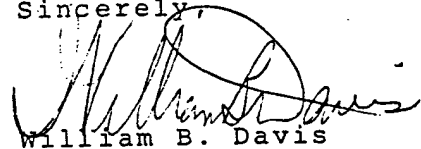
I know how easy it is to get "locked in" to an established system and not be bold enough to challenge it. In all sincerity, I ask you to declassify Trends unless you know of some compelling reason other than bureaucratic inertia not to make the change.

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I have no idea what other senior officers think about this, and have not consulted them. However, by copy of this letter, I am sharing this suggestion with several PAOs in the hope that they will forward their comments (pro or con) to you.

It will be appreciated if you would let me have your own thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,



William B. Davis  
Public Affairs Advisor

cc: PAO, Vienna  
PAO, Brussels  
PAO, Ottawa  
PAO, Copenhagen  
PAO, Helsinki  
PAO, Paris  
PAO, Bonn  
PAO, Athens  
PAO, Rome  
PAO, Rabat  
PAO, The Hague  
PAO, Oslo  
PAO, Madrid  
PAO, Stockholm  
PAO, Bucharest  
PAO, Warsaw  
PAO, Budapest  
PAO, London  
PAO, Pretoria  
PAO, Ankara

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

P. O. Box 2604

Washington, D. C. 20013

2 FEB 1981

Mr. William B. Davis  
Public Affairs Advisor  
U.S. Delegation - MBFR  
Vienna, Austria

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you for your letter of 12 January on classification of the FBIS TRENDS. This question is currently under study, and we welcome your perspective on it. As you may have surmised, the issue is not as cut and dried as it might seem at first glance. While the sources are unclassified, articles in the TRENDS sometimes bear on sensitive policy matters. Our desire to make the publication readily accessible in the most easily usable form to our large official readership is tempered by concern about disseminating it with no restraints on its use.

Our present practice, which is under review, is to publish the document as a whole under classified cover as a safeguard against unauthorized use, although individual articles are normally marked FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. As long as this practice continues, I believe there is a way in which we can accommodate your needs. It would be no problem for us to wirefile unclassified (FOUO) articles bearing on subjects of interest to the Delegation on the day they are published. Timely receipt of such articles by wire might well obviate the need for you to receive the hard-copy publication at all, thereby eliminating the time-consuming handling procedures.

If the above approach appeals to you, please let us know how broadly you would like us to define criteria for the selection of articles to be wirefiled. We would then start immediately to add TRENDS articles to our unclassified wire support services to the Delegation.

Meanwhile, please be assured that your comments will be taken into account in our consideration of how best to disseminate the TRENDS.

Sincerely,



Director

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